technologies including varieties and hybrids were demonstrated, an yields increase ranging from no advantage to 50% yield advantage was observed.

(c) The ICAR Institutes and the centres of different All India Coordinated Research Projects located at SAUs are developing improved varieties/hybrids, crop production and protection technologies and conducting frontline demonstrations on farmers' field to demonstrate the yield advantage of new technologies. In addition. Government are implementing Programmes/Schemes like National Watershed Development Project for Rainfed Area, Integrated Scheme of Oilseeds. Pulses, Oil Palm and Maize, promotion of Integrated Nutrient Management, Micro Irrigation and other Programmes/Schemes to improve Productivity of different crops. The strategies to achieve high growth include focus on potential areas, regionally differentiated strategies, crop diversification and the scientific management of natural resources.

Condition of **fishermen**

31. SHRI TARIQ ANWAR: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have reviewed the condition of the fishermen in the country during the last two years;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) the details regarding the Centrally sponsored Board/Federation for implementation of various schemes of the Central Government; and

(d) the total amount of funds provided during the last three years to this Board/ Federation?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI TASLIMUDDIN): (a) and (b) The Government of India has carried out Marine Fisheries Census in 2005, which *inter-alia* provides certain indicators of welfare of marine fishermen. In addition an impact evaluation study of the National Scheme of Welfare of Fishermen, which is a Centrally sponsored scheme being implemented by States/UTs. The study has been conducted by the National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development Consultancy Services (NABCONS) Pvt. Ltd. The study report has *inter-alia* pointed out various strengths and weaknesses of the programme and suggested modifications in the guidelines for enhancing welfare of fishermen while recommending continuance of the scheme during the Eleventh Plan.

(c) and (d) National Fisheries Development Board (NFDB) has been set up in September, 2006 with its headquarters at Hyderabad to realize the untapped potential of fisheries sector in inland and marine fish capture, culture, processing and marketing of fish, and over all growth of fisheries sector with the application of modern tools of research and development including biotechnology for optimizing production and productivity from fisheries. An amount of Rs.30.00 crore was released to the Board in 2006-07.

The National Federation of Fishermen's Co-operative Ltd. (FISHCOPFED) is a national level Co-operative Federation established under the Multi-State Co-operative Societies Act, 2002 which operates under the administrative control of the Ministry of Agriculture, Government of India. The objective of the FISHCOPFED is to facilitate, coordinate and

promote fishing industry in the country through co-operative action. During the last three years an amount of Rs. 4.37 Crore have been released to FISHCOPFED.

Alternative occupations for small and marginal farmers

†32. SHRI DATTA MEGHE: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the National Commission for Farmers, constituted by Government has indicated that marginal and small farmers intend to opt much profitable occupations instead of cultivation as it is not economically profitable;

(b) if **so,** the steps taken by Government to initiate other occupations alongwith agriculture; and

(c) the action taken by Government for bio-conservation in bio-diversity rich States like Uttarakhand, Jharkhand, Chhattisgarh and Sikkim of the country?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI KANTILAL BHURIA): (a) and (b) National Commission on Farmers indicated that, as per national Sample Survey Organisation's survey, about 40% of farmers would like to quit farming if they had the option to do so. However, as such options are little, the Commission, in its Revised Draft National Policy for Farmers, recommended several measures to enhance productivity and income of small farms and farmers and to diversify employment opportunities by strengthening production-processing-value addition-marketing-consumer chain. The Commission also recommended several methods by which small and marginal farmers can gain efficiency and economy like cooperative farming, group farming by Self-Help Groups, small holders' estates, contract farming and Farmers' Companies etc. Government is also implementing several programmes like Bharat Nirman, National Rural Employment Guarantee Programme, schemes for promotion of small and micro enterprises and food processing industries and skill development training to create employment opportunities in the non-farm sector.

(c) The existing National Agriculture Policy aims at growth that is based on efficient use of resources and conserves soil, water and bio-diversity. Government are implementing several programmes in this regard like National Project on Organic Farming, Integrated Nutrient Management, Integrated Pest Management, National Horticulture Mission and Technology Mission for Integrated Development of Horticulture in the North Eastern States, Sikkim, Jammu & Kashmir, Himachal Pradesh and Uttarakhand.

Bird-flu in poultry in North East

33. SHRI MAHENDRA MOHAN: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the latest 'outbreak of bird flu in poultry in the remote North-East was the H5N1 strain;

(b) if so, what preventive measures have been taken by Government, so far;

(c) in how many North-Eastern States this virus has spread; and

(d) how many people have, so far, been affected?

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†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.